

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Cyprus January 7, 2003

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with section 620C(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, I am providing a report prepared by my Administration on progress toward a negotiated solution of the Cyprus question covering the period October 1, 2002, through November 30, 2002. The previous submission covered events from August 1, 2002, through September 30, 2002. Particularly significant during this period was U.N. Secretary-General Annan's submission on November 11 to Greek Cypriot leader Glafcos Clerides and Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktash of a proposed basis for a Cyprus agreement.

As in past reporting periods, U.S. officials provided diplomatic support to the process,

including Secretary of State Powell, National Security Advisor Rice, Special Cyprus Coordinator Thomas G. Weston, and Ambassador to Cyprus Michael Klosson. The United States remains committed to the U.N. effort to find a just and lasting settlement to the Cyprus problem.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard G. Lugar, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks on the Anniversary of the No Child Left Behind Act January 8, 2003

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thank you. It's one of the few jobs in America where you get introduced by your wife on a regular basis—[laughter]—in your home. [Laughter] And we're glad you're here. This is a—you're one of our first guests we've had since the new year. And this is an appropriate gathering because Laura and I share a deep passion to make sure every child gets educated in America.

We want to thank you for coming. And this is an interesting day. It marks the anniversary of an incredibly important legislative accomplishment. It was a year ago that I signed the No Child Left Behind education act. It was the most meaningful education reform probably ever.

I wish all the Democrats and Republicans who helped us on that bill were here

today. They've got other business. One Republican is here, and that's Senator Judd Gregg from New Hampshire, who is the author—the Senate author on the Republican side.

This was a art of what is possible in Washington. It was a legislative victory on behalf of the children of America. And it showed the American people that when people set aside this needless partisan bickering, we can get some positive things done.

So, a year ago we signed the piece of legislation that I'm absolutely confident is going to change our schools for the better, change the whole structure of education for the good. But it also was a signal to those who love to divide in Washington, DC, that when we put our minds to it,

when we focus on the greater good, we can get a lot done.

So I want to congratulate the members of both political parties on this anniversary for working so hard to accomplish a significant and meaningful piece of legislation. And now we've got to get to work. Now we've got to do the job that's expected.

We can say that the work of reform is well begun. And that's—that's a true statement. The work will be complete, however, when every school—every public school in America is a place of high expectations and a place of achievement. That is our national goal.

And there are a lot of good people working on that goal. We've got good people here at the Federal level working on it—no better advocate than—excellence in public schools than Laura. She was a schoolteacher. She's a schoolteacher. She's a reading expert. She is a public school librarian. She's very knowledgeable, and she is passionate. And so this year she's going to spend a lot of time working with the local folks to achieve excellence for every single child.

And so is our—so is Rod Paige, who is running the Department of Education. I like to tease Rod a little bit. When I was looking for somebody to run the Department of Education, I wasn't interested in anybody who was good on the theory. I wanted somebody who was good on actually doing the job of being a superintendent of schools. And he ran the toughest school district in our State of Texas, which was the Houston Independent School District. And he did a great job, because he believed in high standards, accountability, and local control for the schools in the district. And Rod is the right man to be the Secretary of Education at this time in our Nation's history, and he has not let us down.

Secretary Paige. Thank you.

The President. Appreciate you.

If you follow schools and if you follow public education, you know that you can find excellence in schools where you've got

a good principal. Obviously, it requires good teachers. But if you've got a good principal, an innovative, smart, capable person who is motivated and dedicated and who believes every child can learn, you'll find excellence in that particular school. And we've got eight such principals with us today, and it is my honor to herald them.

Bernice Wheelchel, who is the principal of City Springs Elementary School right here in Baltimore, Maryland, or right close here in Baltimore, Maryland. I want to thank you.

Mary Ann Hawthorne is the principal of the Samuel Gompers Vocational and Technical High School in Bronx, New York. Appreciate you, Mary Ann. Thank you.

Keith Owens, who is from Beulah Heights Elementary School in Pueblo, Colorado. Keith. Yes, thank you.

Keith Posley is from Clarke Street Elementary in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

J.R. Guinn, Del Valle High School, El Paso, Texas.

Lorraine Fong, who is the principal from Kew Elementary in Inglewood, California. I appreciate you, Lorraine. Good to see you again.

Patrick Galatowitsch, who is the principal of Rolling Hills Elementary School, Orlando, Florida.

Beth Hager, principal of the Whitney M. Young Middle School in Cleveland, Ohio.

I appreciate you all. I'm glad you're here. I want to thank you for standing up here with Laura and me and Rod. It is a chance for us to remind our fellow citizens that when you find a good principal, thank him or her from the bottom of your heart for doing one of the toughest jobs in the country. But I hope it's one of the most rewarding jobs for you. Because, after all, you're achieving what a lot of people say can't happen, and that is you've taken some tough schools and converted them to little centers of excellence. And you can truly say that because of your efforts and your love and your energy, no child in your

school is going to be left behind. Thank you all.

Today I had the honor of meeting members of the President's Commission on Special Education. I want to thank you all for your hard work. We will be reauthorizing IDEA* this year with Members of Congress. I know Senator Gregg holds this issue close to his heart. I think you'll find that the reforms suggested in the Commission's findings is going to be a great place for you to start, and hopefully finish, Mr. Senator. *[Laughter]*

I also want to thank the education officials from five States, which I will be naming a little later, officials who are on the leading edge of education reform. I'm not going to tip my hand as to why you're here yet, but thank you all for coming. *[Laughter]* I know that many in this room have devoted your entire lives to bringing a spirit of high achievement to education in America, and I want to thank you for that. You understand success. You've seen success firsthand—and unfortunately, too many instances you are aware of the persistent problems in our schools.

Perhaps the biggest problem is that we have passed children from grade to grade, year after year, and those—child hadn't learned the basics of reading and math. That says to me that somebody somewhere along the way believes certain children can't learn, so therefore, let's just shuffle them through.

Many schools in our country are places of hope and opportunity. Eight such schools are here; many schools in the five States represented are places where people can feel hopeful for the future. Unfortunately, too many schools in America have failed in that mission. The harm has been greatest in the poor and minority communities. Those kids have been hurt the worst because people have failed to challenge the soft bigotry of low expectations.

Over the years, parents across America have heard a lot of excuses—that's a reality—and oftentimes have seen little change. One year ago today, the time for excuse-making has come to an end. With the No Child Left Behind Act, we have committed the Nation to higher standards for every single public school. And we've committed the resources to help the students achieve those standards. We affirm the right of parents to have better information about the schools and to make crucial decisions about their children's future. Accountability of results is no longer just a hope of parents. Accountability for results is now the law of the land.

In return for receiving Federal money, States must design accountability systems to measure whether students are learning to read and write and add and subtract. In return for a lot of money, the Federal Government, for the first time, is asking, "Are we getting the kind of return the American people want for every child?" The only way to be sure of whether or not every child is learning is to test regularly and to show everybody, especially the parents, the results of the tests. The law further requires that test scores be presented in a clear and meaningful way so that we can find the learning problems within each group of students. I'll show off a little bit—it's called disaggregation of results. *[Laughter]*

Annual report cards are required to grade the schools, themselves, so parents can judge how the schools compare to others. Excellence will be recognized. It's so important for us to measure, so that we can praise the principals and teachers who are accomplishing the objectives we all hope for. And at the same time, poor performance cannot be disguised or hidden.

Schools that perform poorly will be noticeable and given time and given incentives and given resources to improve. Schools that don't improve will begin to face consequences, such as that parents can move their child to another public school

* White House correction.

or hire a tutor or any other academic help. We will not accept a school that does not teach and will not change.

Schools have a responsibility to improve, and they also have the freedom to improve in this law, and that's important. I can assure you, I haven't changed my attitude about Federal control of schools. When I was the Governor of Texas, I didn't like the idea of Federal control of schools. I felt we were pretty competent in the State of Texas to run our own schools. I still feel that way, now that I've been up here for 2 years. I believe in local control of schools, and this principle is inherent in this bill.

The key choices about curriculum and teaching methods will be made at the State and local level. Input will be given by parents and teachers and principals who know the local culture best. Parents and educators will not be bystanders in education reform. As a matter of fact, in our view, they are the agents of education reform. And this law upholds that principle as well.

Across America, States and school districts are working hard to implement these reforms. Today Secretary Paige is approving the first five accountability plans, hence the five folks I've invited here. [*Laughter*] The first five accountability plans have been approved, and they are from the States of Ohio and Massachusetts, New York, Colorado, and Indiana.

Their plans are rigorous, and their plans are innovative. They are also varied, reflecting the different strengths and challenges within each State. One size doesn't fit all when it comes to public education. What counts are results. What counts are the fact that the schools will be teaching the basics and children learn how to read and compute. These States recognize that.

I want to thank you very much for showing what is possible, for being on the leading edge. The plans show the kind of energy and commitment and good faith that education reform demands. These leaders who have prepared these plans show us

that high standards are not a burden to carry. They show us that this is a opportunity to seize. The leaders also show a faith and confidence in their students, a belief that every child can learn.

Children respond to an atmosphere of high standards. As teachers and parents can tell you, children love to learn. They just love it. And they sense when we have faith in them, and they love to justify that faith. And that's what you all have shown, faith in every child.

The main reservations we've heard in the year since we passed the reform have come from some adults, not the children, who say the testing requirement is an unfunded mandate on the States. Well, that's not true. We put up \$387 million to provide for testing, to pay for the testing in this year's budget. I intend to ask for the same amount next year. We demanded excellence. We're going to pay for the accountability systems to make sure that we do get excellence.

Some have claimed that testing somehow distracts from learning. I've heard this excuse since I was the Governor of Texas, "Oh, you're teaching the test." Well, if a child can pass the reading test, the child has learned to read, as far as I'm concerned.

Other critics worry that high standards and measurement invite poor results. In other words, "Don't measure. You might see poor results," I guess is what they're saying—that they fear that by imposing clear standards, we'll set some schools up for failure and that we'll identify too many failing schools. Well, the reasoning is backwards, as far as I'm concerned, and a lot of other good people are concerned as well. You don't cause a problem by revealing the problem. Accountability doesn't cause failure; it identifies failure. And only by acknowledging poor performance can we ever help schools to achieve. You can't solve a problem unless you first diagnose the problem.

And so the accountability schools understand—the accountability rules understand that schools can achieve. And that’s why these eight are up here with us. And I want to cite two examples. One, Beulah Heights Elementary in Pueblo, Colorado—the proportion of fourth graders reading at or above proficiency has gone from 50 percent, which is clearly unacceptable, to 86 percent in 3 years.

How do we know? We measured. He wouldn’t be standing here if we didn’t measure. We’d be guessing as to whether or not—and we’d find out, unfortunately, after the 50 percent that couldn’t read graduated from high school and still couldn’t read. Accountability helps address problems early, before it’s too late. Accountability gives us a chance to praise a principal and thank your teachers too.

At Del Valle High School in El Paso, less than half the children in that high school could pass an Algebra I exam 2 years ago. See, we measured in Texas. We wanted to know. This year, the number has risen to 74 percent.

I want to tell you what J.R. Guinn has said. He said, “You have to make the expectation of success part of your belief system.” We’re raising the bar, and we expect success. And J.R., you’re getting success. Thank you for your leadership. Good job.

All these school leaders understand it’s not easy to turn a school around. They know that. It’s hard to go from frustration and despair to achievement and pride. Yet these principals and the teachers have made the effort, and they’re seeing the results. And it must make you feel great.

This administration is committed to your effort. And with the support of Congress, we will continue to work to provide the resources school need to fund the era of reform. This school year, we’re providing more money than ever before to help States and school districts. The Federal Government is going to spend \$22 billion this year. Over the last 2 years, we’ve increased funding for elementary and sec-

ondary education by 49 percent. That’s a large increase.

It is not enough to spend more on schools, however. This issue is not just about money. We must spend money more wisely. We must spend money on what works. And we must make sure we continue to insist upon results for the money we spend.

The priorities of the No Child Left Behind Act will be reflected in the budgets I submit, as long as I’m working here. This year, for example, I’m requesting more than \$1 billion for the Federal reading programs in next year’s budget.

Now, I want you to know something about reading. Laura and I share a passion for reading. We want to make sure every child learns to read by the third grade. However, we will not fund reading programs which do not work. My friend Reid Lyon is here from the National Institute of Health. Reid is a reading expert. He understands the science of reading. He explained to me a long time ago, some curricula work and some don’t. He understands what works. Again, I repeat, we’re willing to spend more money. We’re not going to spend money on curriculum that will not teach our children how to read.

But we are willing to spend it, because we understand that if you can’t read, the science programs don’t matter, it’s hard to excel in math. Reading is the gateway to knowledge. Reading is the true civil right of the 21st century, as far as I’m concerned.

And we’re proposing more money for Title I students as well. We’re going to ask for the ’04 budget a billion-dollar increase, up to \$12.3 billion for Title I students, because one of the goals in this Nation has got to be to close the achievement gap.

That starts with having high expectations. You see, I want to repeat what I said earlier: I believe that too many of the adults figure certain children cannot learn. And they just say, “Heck, let’s just move them

through.” So we not only need to make sure the money is there, but we’ve got to make sure the attitude changes. And the accountability systems within the No Child Left Behind Act insist that we have an attitude change in America. That’s what this says.

One year ago, we met the first challenge of education reform. We passed the law. And now we’ve got another challenge, and that’s the implementation of this law. Today we honor five States; there are 45 more to go. Some of the education leaders of those States are here. We look forward to seeing your plans. We look forward to seeing the spirit of the No Child Left Behind law in your plans. We look forward to strong accountability systems. We look forward to seeing the implementation of curricula that works. We look forward to the hiring of principals who know how to lead a school. We look forward to rewarding teachers who are not only lending their

hearts but their talents to make sure no child gets left behind. We look forward to a culture in America that understands every child can learn. And we look forward to the day that no child in this country is ever left behind.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:46 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Keith Owen, principal, Beulah Heights Elementary School in Pueblo, CO; and G. Reid Lyon, chief, Child Development and Behavior Branch, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health. He also referred to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Public Law No. 91–230); and Title I of the Improving America’s Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law No. 103–382), which amended Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Public Law No. 89–10).

Remarks on Signing Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation Legislation Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders *January 8, 2003*

The President. Thank you all for coming today. I’m going to have a statement, and then we’ll ask you to leave so we can get down to our business.

I want to welcome Members of the Senate and the House, both Republicans and Democrats, for this, the first of many meetings we’ll have this year to figure out how we can work together and get some things done on behalf of the American people.

Yesterday and today the Senate and the House acted on behalf of the unemployed workers of America. I have the extension of unemployment benefits in front of me. I want to congratulate Senators Frist and Daschle and Speaker Hastert and Leader Pelosi for the good work on behalf of the American workers.

And right now it is my honor to sign this piece of legislation, which should bring some comfort to those of our fellow citizens who need extra help during the time in which they try to find a job. So congratulations for a good job, and it’s my honor to sign the bill.

[*At this point, the President signed the bill.*]

The President. I signed this, and I intend to sign a lot of other bills this year. And I know the only reason I’ll be able to do so is because we’re going to work together. We owe that to the American people. It’s the spirit that now prevails in this room. And I look forward to working with Members of both parties to get a lot done to